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A HAPPY INVOLVEMENT
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By Harold Carter

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"And so I am going away, Juanita."

The girl looked at him in a dim, uncomprehending way. During the six months that he had spent in New Mexico, at the hotel where she assisted her father, Ralph Brunton had come to mean everything to her.

Her indolent father, having amassed a comfortable fortune as the landlord of the most prosperous hotel along the coach route, had had the means to educate his daughter at the convent at Santa Fe. Juanita had all the Spanish charm and grace, now, with the education and refinement gotten from the good sisters she could have picked her choice of the wealthy suitors for her hand.

But Ralph Brunton seemed utterly different from the rough ranchers and prospectors who stayed at the hotel, tried to flirt with her and went away. He had never attempted any liberties with her. In his presence, under his respect, her high spirits were subdued to a timid, wistful endeavor to win his regard.

And she, too, had come to mean everything to him, though he dared not admit it to himself. Because—

"I know why you are going," said Juanita. "There is some girl in the east, isn't there, Ralph?"

He admitted it. He had not told her, but she had always guessed the reason why he had never made love to her until three nights before. Then the realization of the impending separation had unstrung him. Perhaps it was also the influence of the peaceful night scene, the crisp air, the sparkling stars, the wind among the cactus. He had turned to her and suddenly she was in his arms and their lips together.

And the two days that followed were heaven for both of them. But

it was different from heaven, because it ended.

"I am going away, dear," said Ralph.

She was too proud to try to detain him. "But, remember," she said, half crying, half jestingly, "'The Miners' Rest' is always open to wayfarers."

A pressure of the hand and he was gone toward the coach stables. Afterward Juanita saw him riding away in a cloud of dust. She put her head down on her arms and cried.

A year before Ralph had been sent west with lung trouble. He had been



Juanita Saw Him Riding Away in a Cloud of Dust

engaged to Mary Leeson; his father and hers were partners in a number of mining claims. Both men were millionaires. In was a natural thing that Ralph, fresh from college, should fall in love with Mary.

He had gone the pace, too, in his last year. A cold, neglected, had spread to his lungs; the upshot was